

...And Bring Your Own Cloak and Dagger

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The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), that bastion of secrecy and clandestine activity, will be trying something new this weekend.

But this time, the veil will be lowered a bit as CIA agents sit down with young people to discuss employment opportunities in the government's most obscure agency.

The occasion is the second annual NAACP Black Festival scheduled for Saturday from noon to 11 p.m. at Pittsfield's Pitt Playground.

For the first time ever, according to John Unumb, deputy assistant to the CIA director, the intelligence agency will send agents to a festival to discuss career opportunities with the general public.

"The purpose as I understand it is that these representatives of government agencies and private industry will sit down and rather informally counsel these people on what it is their organizations are looking for," said Unumb.

The CIA is one of 23 public and private agencies and businesses to send representatives to the festival.

While Unumb said the Pittsfield appearance of CIA agents is not a radical departure from the agency's recruitment policies, he conceded that the move will tend to broaden CIA visibility.

One factor behind the decision to accept the NAACP's invitation to appear in Pittsfield is a government-wide edict to enlist more minority employees.

The CIA representatives agreed to attend the festival after a written invitation from Frank T. Walker, president of the Berkshire County chapter NAACP.

Walker said he saw an advertisement in the May issue of EBONY magazine soliciting inquiries about

CIA employment opportunities and decided to request agency spokesmen to attend the fair.

While the CIA strives to keep a secrecy lid on its intelligence gathering activities, the agency does conduct an active and overt recruiting program, according to Unumb.

"The fact that we exist, that we're in Langley (Va.), that we're interested in bright, young university people of a variety of disciplines, all that is pretty well spelled out in brochures that people who do recruiting pass around," Unumb said.

"We do have offices across the United States," he said.

The Pittsfield visit Saturday by two agents is designed to let high school and college students know what subjects they should pursue in their education to be prepared for a job in the CIA. The CIA is prohibited by law from operating within this country.

